

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 05845 151748Z
ACTION NEA-11

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PK
SUBJECT: BHUTTO APPEAL ENDS FOURTH WEEK: COURT ADJOURNS UNTIL JULY 1

REF: A) ISLAMABAD 5648, B) ISLAMABAD 5389, C) ISLAMABAD 5191

1. SUMMARY: THE RITUAL READING OF EVIDENCE CONTINUED
THIS WEEK IN PAKISTAN'S SUPREME COURT HEARING IN THE APPEAL
OF FORMER PM BHUTTO AND FOUR OTHERS ON THEIR MURDER
CONVICTIONS. AN EIGHT-POINT AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BETWEEN
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 05845 151748Z

BHUTTO'S COUNSEL AND THE STATE RESOLVING THE FORMER PRIMIN'S
COMPLAINTS ABOUT ADEQUATE PRISON FACILITIES. THE COURT
HAS ADJOURNED UNTIL JULY 1 SO THAT THE CHIEF JUSTICE
MAY ATTEND AN ASIAN JURISTS' CONFERENCE IN JAKARTA.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE SUPREME COURT'S HEARING OF THE APPEAL OF FORMER PM BHUTTO AND FOUR OTHERS ON THEIR MURDER CONVICTIONS ROLLED THROUGH ITS FOURTH WEEK WITH THE CONTINUED READING BY THE DEFENSE OF PROSECUTION EVIDENCE PRESENTED AT THE LAHORE HIGH COURT TRIAL. THE ACTIVITY IS NOT THE STUFF OF HIGH DRAMA, BUT IS AN ESSENTIAL PRECURSOR TO THE PRESENTATION OF FORMAL ARGUMENTS BY THE STATE AND THE APPELLANTS. SO FAR, REVIEW OF THE TESTIMONY OF 35 OF THE PROSECUTION'S 41 WITNESSES HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

3. BHUTTO'S LAWYER, YAHYA BAKHTIAR, FOCUSED AGAIN ON THE STATE'S WITNESSES, CLOSELY EXAMINING THEIR TESTIMONY THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW EACH OTHER BEFORE THE MURDER AND SCRUTINIZING THEIR MOVEMENTS IN THE DAYS BEFORE AND AFTER THE INCIDENT. BAKHTIAR ALSO CONTINUED HIS PURSUIT OF BOTH THE GOVERNMENT'S QUESTIONABLE BALLISTICS REPORT AND THE DISAPPEARING MACHINE GUNS WHICH WERE ALLEGEDLY USED IN THE MURDER.

4. AN EIGHT-POINT AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN BHUTTO AND THE RAWALPINDI JAIL AUTHORITIES WHICH IS DESIGNED TO GUARANTEE BHUTTO SUCH AMENITIES AS A TABLE LAMP AND BOOKS,

AND THE RIGHT TO MEET HIS COUNSEL OUTSIDE OF THE JAIL CELL TO "AVOID THE APPREHENSION OF BUGGING."

5. MIDWAY DURING THE WEEK, THE CHIEF JUSTICE ANNOUNCED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 05845 151748Z

THAT HE WOULD ADJOURN THE PROCEEDINGS FOR TWO WEEKS AS OF CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON THE 14TH SO THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO HONOR A LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT TO ATTEND THE ASIAN JURISTS' CONFERENCE IN JAKARTA. THE APPEAL WILL RESUME ON JULY 1.

6. DURING THE RECESS BHUTTO WILL APPARENTLY REMAIN IN RAWALPINDI, THE SUPREME COURT WILL DISPERSE TO CATCH UP ON MUCH OF THE REST OF ITS WORK IN SINGLE JUDGE BENCHES, AND SUPREME COURT JUSTICE MUHAMMAN AKRAM WILL SERVE AS ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE. HUMMEL

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